

Remarks

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Interview granted on August 15, 2006.

Claims 1-10, 12-15 and 17-25 were pending in the application. Claims 13 and 21 were objected to, and claims 1-10, 12, 14, 15, 17-20 and 22-25 were rejected. By this paper, claims 1, 8 and 12 have been amended, and reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested. Furthermore, new claim 26 has been added.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and § 103

Claims 1-3, 6-9, 12, 14, 15, 17-20 and 23-25 were rejected under § 102(b) as being anticipated by International Publication No. WO 00/06426 (WO '426). Claims 4 and 10 were rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over WO '426 in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,206,410 to Brown (the '410 patent); and claim 5 was rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over WO '426 in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,967,546 to Homier et al. (the '546 patent).

Without agreeing with the rejections, claims 1, 8 and 12 have been amended in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion on page 7 of the Office Action. More specifically, claim 1 has been amended to recite that the first section of the deployment member is connected to the trim cover "at a first connection location," and the second section is connected to the first section "at a second connection location proximate the trim cover," wherein "the second connection location is spaced away from the first connection location." Claim 8 has been amended to recite that the first end of the deployment band is connected to the trim cover on one side of the deployment seam "at a first connection location," and the second end is connected to a portion of the deployment band proximate the first end "at a second connection location spaced away from the first connection location." Claim 12 has been amended to recite that the first section of the deployment device is connected to the trim cover "at a first connection location," and the second section is connected to the first section "at a second connection location proximate the trim cover," wherein the second connection

location is “spaced away from the first connection location.” Because the combination of features recited in any of claims 1, 8 and 12 is not disclosed in any of the cited references, claims 1, 8 and 12, as well as the associated dependent claims, are believed to be allowable.

New Claim

Claim 26 has been added to recite features of objected to claim 13 in independent form. It should be noted, however, that the claim 13 requirement that the housing portions be “movable away from each other upon inflation of the air bag” is not included in claims 26. Because claim 13 was indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form, new claim 26 is believed to be allowable.

Although page 5 of the Office Action indicates that claim 13 was rejected, the Examiner confirmed during the interview that the rejection is incorrect. Furthermore, the Examiner confirmed that claim 13 is an objected to claim, as indicated in the Office Action summary and on page 6 of the Office Action.

Conclusion

Applicants have made a genuine effort to respond to each of the Examiner's objections and rejections in advancing the prosecution of this case. Applicants believe that all formal and substantive requirements for patentability have been met and that this case is in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. If any additional issues need to be resolved, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at his earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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